Policy document for individual support for students with disabilities

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<th>Type of document</th>
<th>Policy document</th>
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<tr>
<td>Decision by:</td>
<td>Vice-Chancellor</td>
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<td>Validity period:</td>
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<td>Area:</td>
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<td>Office responsible:</td>
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Introduction

The work towards making Umeå University more accessible for people with disabilities described in the Plan for equal opportunities and equal access at Umeå University (ref. 300-2881-11). It is stated that the University, just as other authorities, will work towards making their premises, operations and information more accessible. Each organisational office is responsible for the accessibility of their individual operations.

Occasionally, specific solutions are needed for individual students to compensate for deficits in general accessibility. However the need for separate solutions is expected to decrease over time, as accessibility at the University increases.

This policy document aims to clarify the University’s internal division of responsibility for individual support and adaptations for students with function impairments.

1. Applicable regulations

In accordance with Section 1 of the Ordinance (2001:526) on Central Government Agencies’ Responsibilities for the Implementation of Disability Policy, authorities shall develop and manage their operations with consideration to the handicap policy goals. The Authorities shall work towards ensuring that persons with disabilities are able to fully participate in society and are given equal living conditions. The authorities should pay special attention to ensuring that their premises, activities and information is accessible for persons with disabilities.

In accordance with Chapter 2 Section 5 of the Discrimination Act (2008:567), a person conducting activities referred to in the Education Act (1985:1100) or other educational activities (an education provider) may not discriminate against any child, pupil or student participating in or applying for the activities. Employees and contractors engaged in the activities shall be equated with the education provider when they are acting within the context of their employment or contract. The prohibition of discrimination also applies in cases where an education provider, by taking reasonable measures regarding the accessibility and usability of the premises, can see to it that a person with a disability who is applying or has been accepted for education under the Higher Education Act (1992:1434) or for education that can lead to a qualification under the Act concerning authority to award certain qualifications (1993:792), is put in a comparable situation to people without such a disability.

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1 The term ‘disabilities’ and ‘function impairment’ are defined at [www.socialstyrelsen.se](http://www.socialstyrelsen.se) in the following way:
The National Board of Health and Welfare national terminology and classification resource opted to publish the new and revised concepts in 2007.
The changes mean that: Disabilities now constitute a separate term and are defined as a: “limitation such as a function impairment refers to a person in relation to their surroundings. Examples of these limitations are difficulties in managing everyday tasks and a lack of participation in the workforce, social relations, free time and cultural activities, education and democratic processes. Most of all, it refers to a lack of accessibility in the surrounding environment”.

The changes aim to make a clear distinction between what is regarded as a person’s decrease of functional ability and what concerns problems that face a person with function impairments in relation to their environment. Disability occurs as soon as a person with function impairment meets a lack of accessibility or other form of barrier in the surrounding environment. Through using the term function impairment in accordance with the new description, it also becomes easier to make a clear-cut description of the surrounding environment’s impact on those difficulties that can be met by persons with function impairments.

In the policy documents, both ‘disability’ and ‘function impairment’ will be used in accordance with the above.
2. Definition for individual support for students with disabilities

Pedagogical support is a collective term for the varying types of support offered to individual students to compensate for difficulties that may occur in a study situation as a result of disabilities. Pedagogical group measures may also be considered.

2.1 Special pedagogical support

The special pedagogical support at Umeå University is financed by a specific post in the University budget\(^2\). The funds are to be used to compensate for additional costs that occur when addressing difficulties in the study situations of individual students, i.e., in those cases where separate solutions are essential for the student to be able to study under equal conditions. The University will annually review the costs and details for the number of students who have received support from the national coordinator.

Student Services is responsible for the allocation of funding from the specific budget for pedagogical support for students with disabilities. Taking the type of disability into consideration, in addition to the specific course requirements, and after consulting with the student (and where appropriate, the department) the coordinator for students with disabilities decides which special pedagogical support will be provided.

The University coordinator decides upon the following types of support, among others:

- **Note taker**
  A course mate helps the student with disabilities to take notes during lectures and seminars.

\(^2\) If the annual cost exceeds 0.3\% of the University's basic education grants, the University may apply for additional funding from the Ministry of Education and Research, via the national coordinator at Stockholm University. However, this does not include the costs for equipment, or investments and measures that relate to the general accessibility of a higher education institutes.
Mentor
A student helps to structure and plan the studies by making agreements and following up on them. He/she can also help to structure the course material.

Assistant/guide within the university
Often a course mate tasked with providing practical support for the student with disabilities, in conjunction with the teaching. This can, for example, be moving between premises, help with copying, help during lectures etc.

Adapted course literature
All literature can be adapted to a spoken book through MTM (Swedish Agency for Accessible Media). It can also be magnified or transformed into braille.

The Resource Lab at the University library
In the Resource Lab, various types of computer support are available, with software adapted for persons who have impaired sight or difficulties with reading and writing.

Sign language/written interpretation
All forms of teaching in spoken Swedish or English are interpreted into Swedish sign language or written Swedish.

2.2 Other pedagogical support
The student who has been awarded the right to pedagogical support must provide information about their need for other pedagogical support/adaptation to their education. The University’s coordinator submits copies of the decision and recommendations to the programme counsellor/equivalent at the departments applicable. The concerned student counsellor/equivalent contacts the student to present the support and course of action. The Head of Department or person appointed by the Head decides upon individual adaptations 3. Smaller adaptations are usually paid for by each respective department, while more expensive adaptations can receive compensation from the budget for pedagogical support. If the department wishes that the adaptations are paid for by the budget for pedagogical support, the measures should be planned together with the coordinator at Student Services in good time. The departments are responsible for the development of pedagogical methods in teaching and examinations and any potential costs that may be caused by this.

The student counsellor has a special responsibility for the preparation, support and follow up of measures and must be particularly aware of students with disabilities.4. The student counsellor/equivalent therefore have the responsibility to, when needed, inform other departments about the student’s need for special pedagogical support.

The Head of Department or person appointed by the Head makes decisions concerning the following support measures:

- Alternative examination formats
May include a variety of measures, depending upon the student’s needs and the nature of the course. This may include additional time in written examinations, a separate room, access to computer support, verbal examination, take-home examinations etc.

- Individual study plan
Organisation-related study measures, such as adaptation of the syllabus and timetable, part time studies etc.

3 Adaptation to individual needs must always be considered for students who are disadvantaged by the chosen form of tuition or examination on account of a functional impairment. (Pedagogical Plan of Action for Umeå University, 2013 - 2013)
4 Goals and local provisions for study guidance ref. 102-437-07
- **Additional supervision for reports and thesis writing**
  Supervision in addition to the allocated supervision time for theses, PM, group tasks to be submitted or similar.

- **Additional individual teaching support/support for placement (VFU), internships etc.**
  Additional, individual teacher support that should complement normal teaching.

In conjunction with the adaptation measures made by the departments, the focus should always be on the teaching goals (anticipated study results). These adaptations should not result in a lowering of the expectations for results, but the path to attaining goals should be designed so that students with disabilities are not disadvantaged compared to their course mates.

A teacher can be given support by central functions. The Centre for Teaching and Learning (UPC) offers courses and seminars in university pedagogy. It is tasked with supporting the teachers at Umeå University when they need to evaluate and develop their teaching, supervision and professional teaching ability. The coordinators at Student Services are a resource that can be consulted about any uncertainties regarding disabilities.

### 2.3 Other important considerations

#### Sound recording
Students who as a result of their function impairment require specific support materials have the right to make audio recordings of lectures. Recording may only take place if the student is present at the lecture. Needs for this should be made known before the lecture, in good time. If asked, it is the responsibility of the student to provide certification from the disability coordinator\(^5\) at Umeå University \(^6\).

#### Establish course syllabuses in good time
Course syllabuses and reading lists should be available at least two months before the start of the course, to ensure that the course literature can be made into a spoken book for students with disabilities in time. Students requiring such support must inform the course coordinator of this in good time\(^7\).

### 2.4 Other compensatory support
In addition to pedagogical support, a student may also need other adaptations or specific equipment in order to conduct their studies under the same conditions as others. This include renting of portable headphones, adjustable chairs and tables, laptop computers for examinations, special premises or areas.

The respective department/unit is responsible for providing the necessary support. A decision by the University coordinator concerning the right to pedagogical support is sufficient grounds for a decision by the Head(s) of Department, or a person appointed by them, to provide the student with support, as stated above.

### 3. Aims and responsibilities

The aim is for the University to be accessible.\(^8\) Work towards an accessible and inclusive University includes minimising/limiting obstacles in the study environment. Students with function impairments at first, second and third-cycle level have the right to specific support during their studies in order to compensate for difficulties in the study environment. For the individual student's studies to function with as few problems as possible, it is often required that many different operational areas cooperate.

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\(^5\) The disability coordinator is the coordinator for students with disabilities  
\(^6\) Rules concerning audio recording, photography and filming etc. in teaching situations (Decision from Vice Chancellor Ref. no. 500-4078-08)  
\(^7\) Rules and guidelines for study administration (Ref: 500-1928-08)  
\(^8\) Plan for equal opportunities and equal access at Umeå University, https://www.anstalld.umu.se/digitalAssets/95/95276_plan-fr-jmstldhet-likabehandling-120401-130630.pdf
In the decisions made by the University coordinator for students with disabilities, there may be recommendations for both pedagogical and other compensatory support. The coordinators for students with disabilities have a particular responsibility to notify the respective department/unit when adaptations are necessary.

The respective department/unit is responsible for providing support (see activity list in chapter 4). A decision by the University coordinator concerning the right to pedagogical support is sufficient grounds for a decision by the Head(s) of Department, or a person appointed by them, to provide the student with support. The division of responsibility for measures is specified below.

4. Application and decision

Students with a documented function impairment can apply for support and adaptations. For students to have access to pedagogical support, they need to be admitted to and registered for a course. The student applies for pedagogical support for disabilities on a special form that can be found on the Umeå student web. The student’s application should include certification, investigation or equivalent proof of function impairment. The coordinator for students with disabilities administers the application and issues a decision for the right to special pedagogical support. Rejection of applications for pedagogical support cannot be appealed. Such a decision will be issued in writing.

The decision includes the support measures the student has been granted, their scope and duration. For existing cases, a recommendation is also sent to the department responsible for the programme/course for alternative study and/or examination formats. The application, decision and recommendation for pedagogical support will be kept on record.

The decision and recommendations will be provided to the student in writing and copies sent to the appropriate student guidance counsellor/equivalent at the department. The recommendation should make clear that alternative examination or teaching forms have been decided upon by an examiner/equivalent.

Coordinators inform the student that they have a personal responsibility for ensuring that the pedagogical support functions as well as possible, for example by informing the course coordinator/examiner in good time about their need for an adapted examination.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Who is responsible/makes decision</th>
<th>How</th>
<th>Who finances</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Application with the decision of eligibility for pedagogical support</td>
<td>Head of Student Services/ coordinator</td>
<td>Personal contact with the student. Certification of function impairment is required.</td>
<td>Student Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision on eligibility for pedagogical support</td>
<td>Head of Student Services/ coordinator</td>
<td>The decision and any recommendations are based in the interview with the student and a certificate to support that the student has a disability. Certification can be issued by a dyslexia tester, doctor or other supervisor. Decisions and recommendations are issued in writing to the student and copies sent to the relevant student guidance counsellor/equivalent person at the department.</td>
<td>Student Services</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* 'Student' also refers to those persons who have been admitted but have not yet begun their studies.
4.1 Premises and equipment

The main focus is for premises to be accessible. Should the premises not be accessible, the Building Office is responsible for any potential and essential rebuilding. University Services is responsible for providing any special equipment for bookable communal university premises.

Costs for personal aids are not compensated by the university; however there can be an individual need for other compensatory support, in the form of adapted equipment such as stethoscopes, microscopes etc. Each respective department/unit is responsible for providing equipment that is necessary for completion of studies and that are not financed by another party, such as the county council or Municipality.

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<th>How?</th>
<th>Who finances?</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Booking of specifically equipped premises - RH, hearing loops etc.</td>
<td>Head of Department</td>
<td>Book via the booking system. This requires thorough planning ahead.</td>
<td>No extra costs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides special equipment (for bookable, communal premises)</td>
<td>Head of Service Office</td>
<td>Loan of items such as portable hearing loops, adjustable desks and chairs from House Services/the Service Centre in each respective house.</td>
<td>Student Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adaptation of teaching premises</td>
<td>Head of the Building Office</td>
<td>Reconstruction</td>
<td>Building Office</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2 Operations (education)

The coordinator for students with disabilities is responsible for the management of special pedagogical support. Student Services distributes a specific budget for special pedagogical support. The Head of Department or person appointed by the Head at a department, and the Head of Unit are responsible for providing other pedagogical support (definitions, see chapter 2).
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Support person, such as mentor, note taker, assistant or similar.</td>
<td>Head of Student Services/coordinator</td>
<td>Via contact with student, department, student unions etc. Support persons are remunerated and the coordinator administers.</td>
<td>Student Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adapted course literature</td>
<td>Head of Student Services/coordinator and the University Library (UB) carry out.</td>
<td>Application to the Swedish Agency for Accessible Media (MTM).</td>
<td>MTM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to the Resource Lab</td>
<td>Head of Student Services/coordinator and the University Library (UB) carry out.</td>
<td>Application/contact with the University Library (UB)</td>
<td>Student Services/UB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sign language interpreter</td>
<td>Head of Student Services/coordinator</td>
<td>Requests interpreters in accordance with existing agreements.</td>
<td>Student Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invigilator for extra time/separate room for examination</td>
<td>The department requests, the invigilator conducts.</td>
<td>The department in cooperation with Examination invigilation services</td>
<td>Student Services Examination invigilation services bills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative examination format</td>
<td>Head of Department</td>
<td>Adaptations based on needs.</td>
<td>The Departments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual study plan</td>
<td>Head of Department</td>
<td>Cooperation between department, student and coordinator</td>
<td>The Departments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extra supervision for reports and thesis writing</td>
<td>Head of Department</td>
<td>Cooperation between department, student and coordinator</td>
<td>The Departments (possible central funding after consultation with the coordinator at Student Services)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extra individual teaching-support/support during placement (VFU) or internships</td>
<td>Head of Department</td>
<td>Cooperation between department, student and coordinator</td>
<td>The Departments (possible central funding after consultation with the coordinator at Student Services)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transcribed net-/video lecture</td>
<td>Head of Department</td>
<td>Also present filmed teaching elements as text. Should be included in early planning of web-based courses.</td>
<td>The Departments (possible central funding after consultation with the coordinator at Student Services)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.3 Information
An individual student in need of information, such as written information, website, e-service, film and
tv/video, telephone calls, correspondence and messages, or meetings and conferences, in another form
than what is currently available, should inform the concerned information provider of any need for ad-
aptations (department or unit).